



Jodi Ross
Town Manager
978-692-5500

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm

Department Spotlight

Westford has been awarded an Energy Efficiency and Block Grant in the amount of \$150,000 for Solar PV.

Funds for this award were made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 through the US Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block grant program. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources developed and is responsible for administering this sub-grant program.

Annual Town Meeting is Saturday, March 27, 2010, 10:00 AM in the Abbot School Gymnasium.

Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Visit
www.westfordma.gov
for current news and
information.

Dear Westford Residents,

March 2010

The outpouring of concern, support and interest in helping our town residents heal after the recent tragic domestic events, and the resolve to do anything and everything possible to assist those in troublesome domestic situations, has been overwhelming. Approximately 50 residents, town officials and town staff have come together as a group to raise community awareness, to educate and offer resources to those in need, and to strategize how we can assist the community as a whole. All walks of life are being represented, including members of the clergy, business community, municipal operations, regional support agencies, and perhaps most importantly, those with direct experience in domestic violent situations. We have divided into task groups which are focusing on creating a mission statement, setting up public forums, collecting resources, and determining the best ways to share this information with the public. Our next meeting is set for Thursday March 11th at 9:00 am in the Millennium Building. Soon we will have a webpage linked through the town's website to share information, however currently this information may be found on the town manager's webpage. Thanks to all who have volunteered to be a part of this community-wide group.

I am delighted to inform you that Westford has been awarded an Energy Efficiency and Block Grant in the amount of \$150,000 for the installation of solar panels on the Westford Academy roof. Thanks to all on the Energy Committee for their efforts to apply for this grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, through the US Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block grant program. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources developed and is responsible for administering this sub-grant program.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) to lease the "Roudenbush" buildings is due back on March 16th. I will be forming a task force to evaluate the proposals based on the Evaluative Criteria set forth in the RFP. If you are interested in participating, please email me by March 15th.

Our Annual Town Meeting is Saturday, March 27th at 10:00 a.m. in the Abbot School gymnasium. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee will be continuing to review and vote their recommendations in a joint meeting on Tuesday March 9th beginning at 7:30 pm. Information about town meeting, including the Fiscal Year 2011 town budget and the town meeting warrant, is available on our website at www.westfordma.gov. The town's Fiscal Year 2011 operating budget in Article 5 is up 1.73% over Fiscal Year 2010. This includes an increase of 3.25% for Westford Public Schools, and an increase of .99% for town operating, net of Enterprise Revenue. Specifics about the Fiscal Year 2011 budget will be shared during a State of the Town presentation at town meeting.

I have highlighted some of the articles to be voted below. Article 9 asks voters to allow us to enter contracts up to 5 years for refuse and recyclables collection, transportation and disposal. We recently went out with a RFP with Chelmsford, as our current contracts were expiring. The RFP resulted in favorable terms, and this vote will allow us to secure these terms for the next 5 years. As mentioned above, the town received a grant for \$150,000 for adding solar panels to the Westford
(Continued on page 2.)



Dear Westford Residents,

(Continued from page 1.)

Academy, and article 10 asks for permission to enter a lease agreement to allow these panels to be installed.

As most of you have heard, the town received a settlement from Maine Drilling and Blasting of \$1,000,000 for assistance with the cleanup of perchlorate in our private and public water supply. Articles 11 and 12 ask to use some of that settlement to offset cleanup costs, and to also establish a perchlorate stabilization fund to allow us to pay future expenses related to this contamination. The town also recently reimbursed the Water Department \$314,376 for their prior incurred expenses related to this problem.

The town is recommending \$1,975,000 in capital appropriations, which include virtualization of our computers (something that will save us significant computer replacement costs in the future), 3 cruisers for the police department, the replacement of the Nabnasset Elementary School roof, replacement of a retaining wall at Main Street and Flag Road, the replacement of several school boilers, and several other capital purchases.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended \$1,505,712 in appropriations from Community Preservation funds in Article 14. Specifics regarding these recommendations are available in the draft motions on our website. Article 15 relates to transferring care, custody and control of a parcel off of Hunt Road, from the Board of Selectmen to the Water Commissioners, and allow them to enter a lease with a telecommunications provider, and grant an easement to the Frances Hill Water Tower. The town voted to allow the Water Commissioners to enter a lease in 2008; and they subsequently entered a lease agreement with T-Mobile to install cell tower equipment on the tank. Recently we learned that the 2008 vote did not transfer care, custody and control of the parcel, so this is seeking that authority.

Article 16 is sponsored by the Water Commissioners, and they are asking for a Town Charter change. If approved this will remove the Water Department from the supervision of the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, and give the Water Commissioners exclusive charge and control of the Water Department. This would include appointing the superintendent, and all employees of the department, including determining the terms, duration, and conditions of employment of the superintendent. This would also allow them to purchase all supplies, materials, and equipment, enter all contracts, and be solely responsible for their facilities, without oversight or approval from the Town Manager or Board of Selectmen.

There are a couple of citizen petitions for changing the Earth Removal Bylaw (Article 21), changing the method for calling for secret ballots at town meeting (Article 22), and amending our Wireless Communications Facility Zoning Bylaw (Article 27), and accepting Orion Way as a Public Way (Article 30).

The Board of Selectmen is asking voters to accept Vose Hill Road and Pond Road (Articles 28 and 29) as public ways, and the Conservation Commission is asking for the authority to lease East Boston Camps, for the purpose of securing revenue to help offset the expenses of the property (Article 31). The commission is also asking the town to allow them to grant permanent conservation restrictions on Rolling Meadows land and Lots 2 and 3 on Cowdry Hill Road (Articles 32 and 33).

This promises to be an interesting town meeting; this is your chance to make your voice heard regarding the operations of our town, and I urge you to attend.

Sincerely,



Fire Prevention Board Revises Smoke Alarm Regulations

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and the Westford Fire Department Fire Chief Richard Rochon want to alert the public that if you are selling your home after April 5, 2010, there are changes in the state's smoke alarm regulations for homes with five or less units.

Chief Rochon said, "The regulation will require that only photoelectric smoke detectors be installed within 20 feet of a kitchen or bath containing a shower, in order to reduce nuisance alarms from cooking smoke or steam that lead people to disable their smoke alarms. Areas located beyond this 20 foot area will be required to contain dual detection, both photoelectric and ionization, using either a single detector or two separate ones."

Use of Technology to Provide Earliest Warning of Fire

Smoke alarms use two main technologies: photoelectric and ionization. Photoelectric smoke alarms are more effective in detecting slow moving or smoldering fire situations whereas ionization detectors are slightly more effective in detecting fast moving fires. Coan said, "This change, requiring the use of dual detection technology, provides the best level of public safety by reducing nuisance alarms that lead people to disable their smoke alarms and by providing the earliest possible warning of a fire and therefore time to escape to safety."

Enforcement on Sale or Transfer

The enforcement of the regulation will continue to take place when the residence is sold or transferred. Homeowners selling their homes after April 5, 2010 will have to meet these new requirements.

Working Smoke Alarms Double Chances of Surviving a Fire

"We must continue to update our fire prevention code to keep pace with evolving technology, knowledge of human behavior, and scientific research," said Coan, "I want to stress that working smoke alarms greatly increase your chances of surviving a fire."

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Since March 2006, all homes have been required to install carbon monoxide alarms on each habitable level in addition to smoke detectors.

For more information about smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms, contact the Westford Fire Prevention Office at 978-692-5542 or the Department of Fire Service's website at www.mass.gov/dfs then click on "Division of Fire Safety". To help guide homeowners and realtors understand the requirements a new brochure A Guide to the Massachusetts Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Requirements When Selling a One- or Two-Family Residence has been published on the Town of Westford Web Site under Public Safety.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lieutenant Donald R. Parsons
Fire Prevention Officer





Highway Department News

As the Highway Department (hopefully!) winds down Winter Operations and prepares for springtime, we would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the tasks we'll be performing:

Pothole Repair:

Pothole patching is periodically done throughout the year but particularly in the spring. This is due to the extreme conditions and stress placed on the pavement by the freeze-thaw cycles that work to bend twist and break the pavement surface. Potholes should be reported to the Highway Department at 978-692-5520. Residents should provide the exact street address if possible. Potholes on Littleton Rd., Powers Rd, and a portion of Boston Rd. by Route 495 should be reported to MA DOT at 508-754-7204.

Street Sweeping:

At the earliest possible time depending on weather and street conditions, this Department undertakes street sweeping. This effort will take some time to complete depending on weather, amount of street debris, equipment availability (breakdown) and budget constraints. We cannot predict when your street will be scheduled due to factors beyond our control.

Catch Basin Cleaning and Maintenance:

We try to clean basins at least once a year. With over 3500 such structures. It is a daunting task. We sincerely appreciate those residents that keep the basin tops clean in front of their homes, particularly in the fall when they can become clogged with leaves. REMINDER: catch basins are not intended to be trash receptacles. They are to collect rainwater and water from melting snow and ice.

Drainage Construction, Repair and Maintenance:

Maintenance to catch basins and storm drains occurs spring through fall. Residents who notice a collapsing basin please report it to the Highway Department at 978-692-5520.

Roadside Mowing/brush cutting:

All road shoulders not maintained by abutting property owner's, are mowed to prevent brush and vegetation encroaching into the travel way. By keeping the shoulders mowed, visibility and therefore safety for vehicle drivers is enhanced. This effort continues during the good weather as time permits.

Traffic Markings/Line Painting:

Street lines and crosswalks are painted by a contractor every year. This work is usually done in June.

Road Repair:

Pavement failure and berms are undertaken during the good weather. Often residents bring these problems to our attention and we complete them as time permits. Pavement overlays are done by a contractor with supplemental help from the Highway Department. Paving roads are significant capital improvements and require construction supervision and inspection from this Department.



Permitting Department News

Employee Spotlight:

On March 20, 2010, Director of Land Use Management Angus Jennings will participate in a panel at the UMass Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Annual Conference in Worcester, MA. The panel is entitled "Introducing Land Use Strategies for Successful Town Meeting vote." More information about the educational conference, which is designed for members of local permitting boards and commissions and their staff, including registration information is available online at www.umass.edu/masscptc

Ongoing Initiatives:

The Permitting Department is engaged in a number of current planning initiatives related to project permitting and infrastructure design and finance. Several infrastructure improvements on Route 110 are at some stage of design or construction, thanks to a combination of local initiatives led by the Engineering and Planning Departments, as well as private development mitigation, and Federal Stimulus funding through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. Later this spring, our offices will invite additional public involvement, including meeting with business owners on the Route 110 corridor, to discuss project design and funding alternatives.

Long Range Planning:

Now that the Westford Comprehensive Master Plan has been approved, the Planning Board is focused on plan implementation. The Board's scheduled discussion of the composition and charge of an as-yet-unformed Comprehensive Master Plan Implementation Committee (CMPIC) was postponed due to inclement weather in February, but the Board will discuss this issue at a meeting later this spring. Once the Committee structure is determined, citizens will be invited to express their interest to participate.

Recycling News

Trash tonnage continues to decline, yielding a cumulative reduction from this time last year of 576 tons. This reduction equates to the saving of approximately \$42,000 in tipping fees so far this fiscal year. Recycling tonnage continues to increase; 89 tons above this time in FY2009!

Details are at www.westfordrecycles.org. Please contact us at info@westfordrecycles.org or 978-692-1582, if you require any further information.



TRANSPORTATION FOR WESTFORD SENIORS

Our seniors have transportation available to them for around town errands and shopping, traveling to and from the doctor's office, hairdresser, supermarket, pharmacy, congregate lunch program each day at 11:30 AM, visiting the senior center and just about anywhere you may need to go. Transportation offered through the Council on Aging (COA) is available Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Transportation is available to residents age 60 and over and the disabled. We do travel to surrounding towns as well as Lowell, Concord, Ayer, Billerica and Maynard. We are willing to look into other locations if you express a need. Monthly trips to the Pheasant Lane Mall and other Malls if interested are available. This transportation is provided on Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) accessible vans. To schedule a ride call Laura at 978 399-2322 a minimum of two days in advance. If you need to cancel on the day of your ride please call the front desk at the Senior Center 978 692-5523. Rides are scheduled on a first-come/first-served basis. The round trip fees are \$3 in Westford, \$4 for surrounding towns and \$6 outside the area.

We will assist you in exploring options for travel to appointments in Boston. We have a limited number of volunteers who are willing to drive their own vehicles to Boston for medical appointments. We can transport you to Lowell to connect with the LRTA bus system which makes stops at all of the major hospitals in Boston. We can connect you to the VA facilities by transporting Veterans to Lowell and Bedford where they transfer to the VA Van. We can also provide you with transportation to the Gallagher Terminal in Lowell for a train to Boston or elsewhere.

Save your gas and ride with us. Call 978 399-2322. The Council on Aging operates a very successful transportation service. The LRTA uses our transportation system as a model for other agencies. Our flexibility in scheduling allows us to accommodate more individuals. In January we provided 617 total trips over 19 days. Almost 600 of these trips were for seniors and twenty trips for non-elders. We are grateful for the \$90,000 in funding that the LRTA provides toward medical transportation.



Westford's Permitting Software and Collaboration Recognized

North Kingstown, RI Wins National Award with www.FBGov.us Permitting and Collaboration

Washington DC: Public Technology Institute (PTI) announced award winners for 2009-2010. An independent panel of judges has identified the Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island as this year's winner for the category of Web and E-Government Services.

Jason Albuquerque, IT Director for the Town of North Kingstown submitted the following to PTI for this award:

Project Title:

Serving the Community by Streamlining the Permitting Process

Problem:

The Town of North Kingstown's staff, residents and businesses voiced their concerns on the need for delivering a more efficient municipal permitting and code violation reporting process.

After several years of exploring and trying different permitting solutions, North Kingstown needed to provide a better channel of communication for citizens, businesses, and any other stakeholders. The vision was to give our taxpayers a method to apply for municipal permits or report ordinance violations in a more streamlined, cost effective and transparent way.

The goals for this streamlined process were to 1) to enable better collaboration between the taxpayers of North Kingstown and the local government, 2) to deliver greater streamlined and transparent services for the citizens and businesses and 3) to improve the citizens and businesses ability to apply for and track all municipal permits.

In order to achieve these goals, the North Kingstown Department of Information Systems teamed with a Public/Private collaboration of a private technology vendor and a "sister" community in Massachusetts.

Response:

In September 2009, North Kingstown completed a permitting and complaint tracking system implementation project with a Milford, Massachusetts based company named Hawkeye Government Solutions, and the Town of Westford Massachusetts in a Public/Private collaboration. The FBGov permitting solution included a front end system that includes an online permit application and violation reporting module that allows the applicants and reporters to track the status of their requests. This system also includes the back end system, which gave North Kingstown staff a comprehensive case management module to streamline permit approvals, investigations and to provide proper and timelier closure to all cases.

Furthermore, the municipality now has the ability to create analytic reports to identify potential trends or problem areas that would not have been apparent previously.

At the time, North Kingstown was the pioneer in the State of RI to deploy a solution of this magnitude.

Website: <http://permits.northkingstown.org>
(Continued on page 8.)



Westford's Permitting Software and Collaboration Recognized

(Continued from page 7.)

Results:

The gains accomplished with the online permitting and complaint tracking management systems are unquestionable – in the months since North Kingstown partnered with Hawkeye Government Solutions and Westford MA, the municipality has significantly improved the relationship with its citizens and business by providing improved communication vehicles for permitting and code enforcement as well as providing transparency into permitting status and complaint tracking resolutions. Also, the automated workflow and central repository for all reports has decreased the amount of time and resources necessary for the municipality to respond to citizen reports and applications.

Because the solution was developed as such a comprehensive software application, it also has the ability to be offered to other communities as software-as-a-service further promoting a shared services model that has become a prevalent subject in the government arena.

For the future North Kingstown is looking to be a hub community in RI to offer a permitting complaint tracking solution as a service to RI cities and towns. This would provide substantial savings for other communities since the system requires no additional Information Technology investments. This in turn allows the municipality to implement a turnkey permitting/code enforcement solution in an extremely cost effective manner. A regional or State wide implementation of this system would also allow for contractors to track their labor within multiple municipalities all in a single interface.

Key Participants:

Hawkeye Government Solutions and the Town of Westford, MA combined are FBGov, a Public Private Collaboration

About PTI

Public Technology Institute is a national, non-profit research and development organization established by and for city and county governments. PTI promotes innovation and collaboration by thought leaders in government, and advances the use of technology to improve the management and delivery of services to the citizen.